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A LETTER TO THE LINEN MANUFACTURERS OF IRELAND.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

LETTER

TO THE

LINEN-MANUFACTURERS

OF

IRELAND,

ON THE

SUBJECT

OF

PROTECTING DUTIES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

LETTER

TO THE

LINEN-MANUFACTURERS

OF

IRELAND.

CHAP. I.

AT a time when ſo many attempts are made to miſlead you, when your feelings are aſſailed by falſe compaſſion, your underſtandings by miſtated evidence, and your ſpirit is called upon by a ſpurious patriotiſm; it may not be a very hopeful, but it is a very laudable taſk to lay a little truth before you. In my argument I lay no claim to originality, I ſhall only collect what has been better ſtated by

others, what the indolence of thoſe who uttered the arguments has neglected to publiſh, what has been traduced and miſrepreſented, but has never been anſwered—When you caſt your eyes upon the appendix, you will recollect how the papers which I give you at their full length have been garbled in the public prints, and when you read the arguments which I have endeavoured to claſs and to reduce to method, you will reflect whether any writer on the ſubject has ever attempted to anſwer, without having firſt endeavoured to miſrepreſent them.

BEFORE you conſider in what manner you would be affected, if the duty on the ſtaple manufacture of a ſiſter country ſhould be retaliated on the ſtaple manufacture of Ireland, it is neceſſary that you ſhould conſider the probable effects of the meaſure itſelf, independent of thoſe collateral circumſtances. We ſometimes think things to be of value, merely becauſe there is ſome danger or difficulty in the purſuit of them. Let us for a while forget that England is more than our ally; let us for a moment ſuppoſe her ſunk from her monopolizing arrogance, to a more than equitable humility; let us ſuppoſe ourſelves

ſelves to be the ſole arbiters of the queſtion; and under theſe ſuppoſitions I will endeavour to prove to you, that a protecting duty, excluding her woollens from our market, would be a meaſure tending to the diminution of our national wealth and national induſtry, and very peculiarly injurious to *you*.

You are undoubtedly ſenſible that the benefits of trade are two-fold. Firſt, it gives an encouragement to the national induſtry, and encreaſes the national wealth, by giving you a market for your productions, more ample and beneficial than what you could find at home; and ſecondly, it procures you a variety of articles for your conſumption, which either you could not procure without it, or which you could not procure on ſo eaſy terms. The linens which you make are valuable to you, not in proportion to the money which you get for them, but to the quantity of the conveniencies and neceſſaries of life which you can procure for that money. If by importation of theſe articles, you get them cheaper than you could without importation, then that import trade is ſo far a benefit to you, and the export of your linens is ſo far encouraged.

raged. It has been indeed the policy of many countries to endeavour to make at home, what they could buy on better terms from foreigners. According to Mr. Adam Smith, the admirable author of the Treatiſe on the Wealth of Nations, this policy is always erroneous, and tends to the diminution of the wealth of any nation that adopts it. According to the arguments of the manufacturers of almoſt every country, this policy is always wiſe with reſpect to their own manufacture. If the articles with which they can ſupply their countrymen, either entirely or in part, be dearer than ſimilar articles which could be imported, yet according to them it is always for the national benefit that their countrymen ſhould be obliged to buy from them. With reſpect to other articles, indeed, which *they* are to purchaſe, the caſe ſeldom appears quite ſo clear to them. A protecting duty on Engliſh coals would not probably be a meaſure of ſuch evident national advantage, in the eyes of the Dublin manufacturers, as a protecting duty on Engliſh woollens, though it is much more likely that Ireland has a ſufficiency of coals, than that ſhe has a ſufficiency of woollens for her own

own conſumption. But as no man ever has been hardy enough to aſſert that foreign trade ſhould be entirely confined to export only; as the utmoſt which the moſt arbitrary and ſelf-ſufficient director of the courſe of commerce has aſſerted is, that there are certain caſes, in which we ought to give a compulſory preference to certain of our own manufactures or productions; it behoves us at leaſt to conſider the nature of the caſe before we decide it to be one of thoſe in which we ought to cramp the natural liberty of our fellow ſubjects. With reſpect to woollens, you muſt perceive that it cannot be the univerſal wiſdom of all the nations of the earth to prevent their import. You hear a great deal of thoſe countries which do prevent ſuch an import, and the epithet of wiſe is very liberally beſtowed upon them; but you do not hear a word of thoſe nations that permit it; and as England does export a very conſiderable quantity beſides what ſhe ſends to us, it is evident that the wiſdom of *ſome* nations induces them to deal with her. It is nonſenſe to talk of protecting duties as a general principle; the utmoſt that can be ſaid of them is, that *there are caſes* in which they may be expedient. I am far from admitting that principle,

ciple, but I believe I cannot be denied another principle, that there are caſes in which they may *not* be expedient; that there may be countries ſo circumſtanced, that an import of woollens *ought* to be admitted. Suppoſe for a moment, that the province of Ulſter were inſulated and made a nation by itſelf, would you not think it madneſs to prohibit the import of woollens into the *Iſland of Ulſter*, from ſome of the neighbouring countries of England, Leinſter, Connaught, or Munſter? Unqueſtionably you would admit them; you know very well you could not do without them; and that you never could do without ſuch an import, unleſs you were to convert to ſheep walks a conſiderable part of thoſe lands which are at preſent employed much better. You would be ſenſible, that it would be better to ſell your linens and to buy the woollens in return; that it would be better to buy the produce of ten acres of paſture with the produce of half an acre of flax, than to expel a numerous and virtuous ſet of men, to make room for a good many ſheep and a few woollen manufacturers. I do not ſay that it would be ſo very abſurd for the kingdom of Ireland to prohibit the import of woollens, as

it

it would be for the ſeparated province of Ulſter, for the reſt of the kingdom is not at preſent ſo populous. But what I have ſhewn you is enough to prove that the meaſure is not of *neceſſity* a wiſe one, nor applicable to *all* countries and ſituations. It is enough to ſhew, that you ought not of courſe to adopt it without any farther thought; that you are to examine into the caſe before you adopt the principles; and that you are neither to take the wiſdom of it for granted, nor wholly to rely on thoſe whoſe intereſt it is to deceive you.

CHAP. II.

Of the Effect of a Protecting DUTY ON WOOLLENS.

TO reſtrain the inhabitants of a free country, from the free uſe of their own property; to tell them you ſhall lay out the earnings of your labour, not in the manner which you pleaſe, but in the manner in which others ſhall think fit to direct you, is certainly in the power of the legiſlature; but it is one of the greateſt and boldeſt exertions of that power, that ever a free nation can ſubmit to.—It may ſometimes be wiſe and neceſſary; but the caſes in which it can be ſo, are extremely few, and the various and complicated circumſtances of thoſe caſes ſhould be weighed with the moſt deliberate caution---I know of no commercial writer who has favoured the principle of directing the courſe of trade by compulſory duties, who has given us a code of general rules, by which we

we ſhould decide in what caſes we ought to adopt ſuch a ſyſtem, and in what caſes to deviate from it.

INDEED it would be impoſſible for ſuch writers to do ſo with any tolerable preciſion; for every caſe has its peculiar circumſtances: The quantity of learning applicable to the ſubject ſhould be almoſt infinite, and the preciſion of mind which is requiſite to decide univerſally on the ſubject, is hardly to be found in human nature.---Yet on this great and comprehenſive queſtion, every man concerned in any trade thinks himſelf perfectly competent to decide, ſo far as concerns his own manufacture---That his trade ſhould be peculiarly favoured, is always the cleareſt point in the world, and if it thrives extremely ill, that is, if it be very unprofitable, and very unfit for his country, then it is (in his mind) the more wiſe and neceſſary to favour it. It is a new thing, however, for other perſons to be equally clamorous for a diminution of their liberty, and for a tax upon their conſumption. It ſeems a little extraordinary for a man to cry out, "I am very ill uſed by my governors. When I have earned a little mo-

ney, I am not forced by the legiſlature to lay it out in the manner they think proper, but may uſe it as I like. If I want a coat, I may buy it from a man who will ſell it to me cheap, inſtead of being forced to go to my countryman, who has not cloth enough to ſupply me, and who ſells it dearer---I am almoſt as much oppreſſed as if I lived in a free port, where I could get every thing I want on the cheapeſt terms"---Such, however, is the complaint of thoſe who join the cry of the woollen-manufacturers. A wiſe legiſlature will conſider a few points before they yield to it----They will conſider that cloaths are a neceſſary of life---They will conſider whether (at preſent) the manufacturers of woollens can ſupply their countrymen with that neceſſary---They will conſider whether, they (hereafter) may be able to ſupply it without injury to the general proſperity of the country—They will conſider whether the diſtreſſes of the woollen manufacturers be real, or pretended--They will conſider whether the benefit conferred on them, be equal to the injury done to others who have an equal claim to their regard. If you will look at the accounts in the appendix, you will

will find that the woollens imported for the conſumption of Ireland, are:

	Yards.
The year ending March 1783, old drapery, - -	371,871
New ditto, - -	420,415
	Stones.
That the whole quantity of wool exported is, - -	2063
That the whole quantity of worſted and bay yarn exported is, -	66,677

Now, as the whole of the wool, woollen, and worſted which we do not manufacture at home, is utterly inadequate to the making the quantity of drapery which we conſume, it is obvious that a tax upon foreign drapery muſt have one of the three following effects---either it muſt be ſmuggled into Ireland, or, it muſt be imported, and the duty paid; or the quantity of wool in Ireland muſt be increaſed 'till it be ſufficient for our own conſumption.

Now, if I prove to you that every one of theſe conſequences will be pernicious to the nation at large, and peculiarly injurious to you—If I ſhow you that the benefit accruing to the woollen manufacturer will be much leſs than

ſhan the quantum of the general injury to others equally meritorious; may I hope, that you will not be led away by men who talk of the deteſtable policy of ſetting the North againſt the South, but who are themſelves ſetting the intereſts of a few againſt the general good of the nation?

Firſt, If drapery be ſmuggled into Ireland, ſo far as protecting duties will have this effect, they will increaſe the price of cloathing to you, to the farmer, and in ſhort to every man in Ireland, in proportion to the riſque which the ſmugglers ſhall run; the woollen manufacturer will indeed be benefited, becauſe he will be enabled to raiſe his price--- He will indeed be enabled to raiſe it conſiderably; for as in this caſe there will not be a ſufficient quantity of Iriſh goods to ſupply our market, the dealers in thoſe goods will have a monopoly of a neceſſary article, except ſo far as that monopoly will be controuled, and their prices kept down by the ſmuggled import. You know very well that when corn is ſcarce the prices riſe extremely; you muſt be equally ſenſible that if cloth be ſcarce, the price of cloth will riſe enormouſly.

mouſly. An import of corn in times of ſcarcity lowers its price. An import of ſmuggled cloth will in like manner lower the price of cloth---But to what degree will it lower that price? certainly it will not reduce it any lower than to ſuch a price as will pay the ſmuggler for his riſque, and alſo will leave him a profit. Therefore the benefit to the dealers in woollen will not be equal to the quantum of the injury done to you, and to the reſt of the people of Ireland; for *they* will RECEIVE this advanced price only on what they SELL, but you will *pay* this advanced price not only on what you *buy* from them, but on the reſt of the woollens which you will conſume, and which will be ſmuggled---beſides the ſuppoſed *national* benefit which is to accrue from protecting duties, is to ariſe ſolely from the *additional* quantity of woollens which Ireland will manufacture in conſequence of them. You know very well that a great quantity is manufactured without theſe duties; you know alſo, that thoſe who have entered into that trade have done it by choice, and not by compulſion; in ſhort, they have entered into it from the ſame motives that have made you and every other tradeſman chooſe the trade they follow---from motives

of

of intereſt---You know alſo, that inſtead of a new DISCOURAGEMENT, they have met with a new encouragement in their trade,—free export, and an operating export.

WHAT reaſon is there then that they ſhould be allowed to enhance the price of ſuch woollens as they now find it their intereſt to manufacture *without* any new aſſiſtance? To tax one ſet of induſtrious men for the benefit of another, ſeems to be not extremely fair. But for the ſake of a ſmall addition to the quantity which they manufacture, to make you pay an advanced price for not only what they will bring to market in *conſequence* of a protecting duty, but for what they bring to market *without* that artificial aid; nay, to make you pay an advanced price for what might be made in another country and ſmuggled, ſeems to me to be the moſt flagrant injuſtice, and the moſt palpable nonſenſe that ever was offered to men in their ſenſes.

THERE are ſome trades ſo circumſtanced that if a tax be laid on the neceſſaries uſed by thoſe who follow them, or if their price be enhanced in any other manner, which is the

the ſame thing in effect, the burden will fal ultimately on the conſumer of their labour, and the profits and proſperity of the trade itſelf will not be materially affected. If the neceſſaries conſumed by tailors, for inſtance, were to be taxed, the trade of making cloaths would ſtill go on; we cannot do without tailors to make our cloaths, and we could not get perſons to follow that trade, unleſs they were enabled to live by it as well as uſual: but ſhew me another trade, the proſperity of which depends upon foreign demand; ſuch is that trade which you follow. If the cloaths or other neceſſaries conſumed by linen manufacturers be enhanced in price, you cannot raiſe the price of your labour or of your commodity. Foreigners will not buy from you, unleſs you ſell as cheap as your foreign competitors, who will not be at all affected by the price of cloth in Ireland, nor in the leaſt conſider that you cannot earn the price of a ſuit of cloaths in as ſhort a time as you uſed to do. If the price therefore of cloaths and of other neceſſaries be encreaſed, the linen manufacture will proportionably decline, and the ſtrength, population, and welfare of the country will decline along with it.

BEFORE I quit this part of my ſubject, I muſt obſerve, that the conſequence of protecting duties will be, that the cloths of England *will* be ſmuggled into Ireland; they are ſo at preſent, even at the low duties. On this head the people of Belfaſt can give you ſome, and the people of Newry a great deal of information; and thoſe who are well ſituated for that illicit trade, and who profit by it at preſent, will profit ſtill more when the duties ſhall be raiſed; accordingly I have obſerved ſome of them already ſhew a violent degree of patriotiſm in favour of this meaſure. You are not ſuch novices as not to know that an increaſe of duty, that is, of temptation, will increaſe an illicit trade; a trade too in an article that is far from bulky, and that is brought from a country within a few hours ſail of you. Two ſhips could import all the woollens which Ireland uſually conſumes, in twelve months. Woollens will be imported undoubtedly, but that you will not get them as cheap as you do at preſent, is evident from this; that under the preſent duties merchants find it generally, though not univerſally, more for their intereſt to pay than run the riſk of evading them;

them; the price, therefore, which you muſt pay for them when ſmuggled, will be greater than that which you now pay, in conſequence of the preſent duties, and of the preſent ſtate of your woollen trade. An advanced price upon all the woollens we ſhall uſe, without the acquiſition of an excluſive domeſtic manufacture, appears to me to be the moſt probable effects of prohibitory duties; and as a duty on coarſe woollens will bear a nearer proportion to their value than the ſame duty on fine cloths, it is not improbable that our regulations will be the moſt frequently evaded in the caſe of that part of the woollen manufacture, which we are the moſt deſirous to protect. I wiſh thoſe perſons who are ready to ſacrifice ſo much of the intereſt of all other trades to the woollen manufacture, and who in negotiation with England, would perhaps ſacrifice ſomewhat to obtain a protecting duty, would conſider this argument; with the Dublin manufacturers, indeed, it will have but little weight; for whether we ſhall force an extenſive woollen trade or not, a protecting duty will anſwer one end to them; that of enabling them to raiſe the price of what they ſell to their countrymen.

SECONDLY, Or we ſhall import from England, paying the protecting duty. If that duty be laid as high as is deſired, this event will not happen; if lower, then you will pay an enhanced price proportionable to the duty; that is, a protecting duty will be injurious to you, in proportion to the quantity of the impoſt. It is obſervable, that a duty on coarſe woollens, is what is *the moſt* inſiſted upon; that is, a tax on a neceſſary is more ſought than a tax on a luxury.

THIRDLY, Or the quantity of cloathing wool in Ireland will be encreaſed ſo as to be ſufficient for the conſumption of the inhabitants. On the poſſibility of the utility of this the argument principally turns. The whole jargon of falſe commercial principles, the whole art of mutilated evidence, the whole force of miſcalculation is directed to this part of the ſubject.

THAT no abſurdity ſhould be wanting in the diſcuſſion of this queſtion, the favourers of protecting duties do not propoſe any general means whereby the wool of the country ſhould be encreaſed, nor any expedient by which you ſhould be preſerved from nakedneſs 'till that happy project be accompliſhed; but

but you are at once to ſubmit to a prohibition before you can poſſibly expect a ſufficient domeſtic ſupply. To what degree this would enhance the price of an article, which in this climate is not a ſuperfluity, muſt in a great meaſure depend upon the degree to which the ſmuggler can evade the law. But you are told that the time will come, in which our black bogs will be converted into ſheep walks, your country will in the end grow rich, and you will have coats to wear; now, if it were propoſed to you to ſubmit to a tax upon linens, the product thereof to be diſtributed as a bounty amongſt the woollen manufacturers, until the quantity of woollen ſhould become ſufficient for the conſumption of Ireland, probably you would not think the propoſition extremely reaſonable. But it would be demonſtrably more reaſonable and leſs burdenſome than protecting duties. To tax the linens which you make, or to tax the neceſſaries which you buy with the price of thoſe linens, would indeed be but *equally* burdenſome, *provided* no more were levied from you in one way than in the other; but ſuch a tax as I ſpeak of, when diſtributed to them in the way of bounty, would only be paid on what they actually manufactured,

whereas

whereas a protecting duty would enhance the price not only of what they make, but of what ſhall be imported fraudulently or otherwiſe. Do yourſelves the juſtice to conſider under what circumſtances they can deſire either. If their manufacture tended more than yours to national wealth, if it tended more to population, or to virtuous induſtry, you might ſubmit to it from patriotiſm. If their trade was more diſcouraged than yours, you might ſubmit to it from juſtice—But what is the fact? You are to prevail upon them to buy your manufactures by a fair competition with foreign linens, by your ſuperior ſkill and induſtry alone, without the aid of any protecting duty, and you are ſatisfied. They have already a ſmall protecting duty, and they are diſſatisfied.

They have a trade, the profits of which enable them to live in the capital where proviſions are the deareſt. You have a trade which enables you to live in the country. If a protecting duty were granted to you againſt them, they would not be materially injured; for they could be ſupplied with linens by you to any amount they could require. But there requires very little reaſoning

ing to convince you, that 2400 ſtone of wool, if it were wrought by them into cloth, would be utterly inſufficient for you. Here I have two arguments to encounter, and as far as I can, they ſhall have a fair and full diſcuſſion.

FIRST, They ſay that we have more cloathing wool, but it is ſmuggled away.

SECONDLY, They ſay our wool would ſpeedily increaſe, ſo as to be ſufficient for our home conſumption.

THE firſt article is indeed but little relied upon; it is neither ſupported by proof, nor probability. To ſmuggle wool out of England is indeed a common practice, and the exiſtence of ſuch a practice, is a proof of the inefficacy of the laws and revenue cutters to ſtop the natural courſe of trade. But in Ireland wool is three or four ſhillings per ſtone, on an average, dearer than it is in England; now, this ſingle circumſtance muſt convince us, that to ſmuggle from Ireland cannot be profitable, therefore not a common practice. The arguments derived therefore from the illicit trade, tend to ſhew-----not that the quantity of Iriſh wool is *more nearly equal* to what is neceſſary for our conſumption, but that it is a

great

great deal farther from it, than what appears by thoſe cuſtom-houſe entries which I have ſtated.

I HAVE already given ſome reaſons for my refuſing any credit to their ſecond argument, " That the quantity of Iriſh wool will ſpeedily encreaſe ſo as to be ſufficient to cloath us.——An high duty, that is a greater temptation to an illicit import, will probably rather increaſe than diminiſh the efforts and ſkill of the ſmuggler—nor is it certain that an advanced price which will enable the woollen manufacturers to ſupport their trade with leſs labour, ſobriety, and invention than they do at preſent, will induce them to become at once more inventive, ſober, and induſtrious. We are told, indeed, with a ſort of triumph, that there WAS a time when Ireland had more than wool ſufficient for her own conſumption: It is very true, Ireland certainly was more a country of ſheep, when it was leſs a country of men: eighty-ſix years ago we could both ſupply ourſelves and ſpare ſomewhat for exportation. What was preciſely the population of Ireland at that period, I have no authentic documents to inſtruct me; but probably it was not

not very much greater than in 1676, in which year the report of the council of trade, drawn up by Sir William Petty, ſtated the people of Ireland to be 1,100,000, the difference between the two periods is but 22 years; now, to argue that Ireland can produce wool enough or more than enough, when ſhe had little more than a third of her preſent inhabitants, is to trifle with your underſtanding. The rapid progreſs of population under our linen and tillage ſyſtem, is an argument that muſt ſpeak to the underſtanding of every unprejudiced man. America alone has increaſed her numbers with greater rapidity, and America has hardly any woollen manufacture. I do not mean by this to inſinuate that a woollen manufacture ought to be diſcouraged; no, that would be to reaſon like my opponents, who are perpetually appealing to the example of other countries which are differently circumſtanced from our own. Every manufacture ought, in my mind, to take its natural courſe; but I cannot lament that my native country has thriven in ſuch as are more favourable to population. The committee of Dublin manufacturers admit that an immediate demand for their goods will for a time raiſe the price of wool; let me add that

it will raiſe the price of wool for a long time, even untill there be a ſufficiency for our conſumption; let me add too, that it will raiſe the price of labour in the woollen fabrics. Let me make another addition, it will raiſe the price of corn. The land which your tillage laws have converted to agriculture, will be reſtored to paſturage by the price of wool being enhanced. Yet if you do not embrace with tranſport a ſyſtem which will enhance the price of food and cloathing, you are to be deemed unfeeling men—and thoſe who adviſe you not to deſtroy yourſelves, are called enemies to their country.

With reſpect to you, theſe evils will be unmixed with any benefit whatſoever: to the landlords of the ſouth and weſt of Ireland, I confeſs that the Dublin committee has held out a pretty ſtrong inducement, an advanced price for wool is certainly of immediate advantage to them; it is an advantage, however, that is attended with ſome inconveniencies: Cloaths are a neceſſary of life, and to raiſe the price of a neceſſary is to raiſe the price of labour, without enabling the labourer to live better than he did before. Now, there is nothing ſo eſſential to the general

neral proſperity of a country, as that labour ſhould be cheap; we are unwilling to tax the primum of any manufacture; labour may not improperly be called the primum of every mannfacture; and it is amazing, how variouſly it is affected by raiſing the price of any neceſſary of life. The labourer muſt pay more for his coat; but it does not end here, even with the labourer; he ſometimes employs a maſon, that maſon pays more for his coat than he uſed, that maſon employs a taylor, who pays more for his coat than he uſed, that taylor employs a ſhoemaker, who pays more for his coat than he uſed; thus the high price of one neceſſary article, acts and re-acts through every ſubdiviſion of labour, and of trade; and the ſeller of wool repays back a part of his additional profit, in proportion as he employs the labour of any of his countrymen.

But it is alledged, that this benefit to the ſeller of wool, will be but temporary. I believe, indeed, that it will be temporary, but not for the reaſons which are given. The manner in which it will operate, appears to be as follows: So far as the protecting duties

ſhall operate to the excluſion of Engliſh woollens, ſo far they will be an encouragement to withdraw land from tillage; the ſcarcity of grain will again raiſe the value of tillage ground, and in conſequence of that, the race of man will be again reſtored in many places to the culture of the fields. The ſouthern and weſtern farmer having his choice to apply his land in the manner moſt beneficial to him, will be directed by the comparative profit of the two modes of employing his ground: as long as the ſame quantity which is now employed to ſupply all our corn, and a part of our wool, ſhall be the only land which is to ſupply all our corn, and a greater part of our wool, ſo long the produce of that land will ſell dear; but let us reflect, that there is a great quantity of land in this kingdom employed in producing *neither* corn nor wool, but is appropriated to the maintenance of the linen manufacture, and why? Becauſe that appropriation of ſuch land is found more beneficial to the occupier. Make corn and wool dearer, and the linen-weaver, who as I have obſerved, cannot raiſe his price in return, will find his trade leſs beneficial than it is, and the comparative profit of

appro-

appropriating the land to the ſupport of that trade, in preference to the ſupplying it to wool or corn, will diminiſh. The final effect, therefore, of protecting duties, will be to diminiſh the linen manufacture, and as ſoon as that ſhall be done, the ſcarcity of wool and of corn will be no more, and the prices of theſe articles will fall to their natural level. I might here go into computation; I might ſhew you what is the greateſt redundancy of corn (proved by the account of export) that this country has ever experienced; and I might prove to you, that an additional quantity of wool ſufficient for our conſumption, could not be produced from three times as much land as that corn grew upon, of courſe that ſuch wool could not be produced without a loſs of a more profitable and eſſential article; but in my mind, a thouſand computations are not worth the plain good ſenſe of a few of Mr. Adam Smith's principles, and my belief is, that *in the end* it would be the linen, and not the corn which would be diminiſhed. The ſwarms of emigrants would be from the northern hive, from whence indeed there have been too many under circumſtances leſs unfavourable to their trade, than thoſe

which

which are now propoſed by the ſages of Dublin. Should I be aſked, do I think the kingdom of Ireland to be unable to produce more linen, more corn, and more wool than it does? I anſwer, that I believe it is able. I believe that two millions of money judiciouſly applied to the improvement of our lands, would enable Ireland to do ſo. But as nations cannot encreaſe their capitals at pleaſure, all that is in their power is to convert their capital to the beſt purpoſes. It is in the power of an injudicious law, to convert the land appropriated to tillage, or to the linen-manufacture, into ſheep walks; but it is not in the power of law to create a capital to be applied to the improvement of our land. It can only change the application of the capital. To *prevent* the encreaſe of capital, we know, is indeed, in the power of men who deter foreigners from ſettling amongſt us, by their contempt of the laws, their invaſion of the liberties of their fellow ſubjects, and their endeavours to excite ſedition.

If it can ever be wiſe to force trade out of its natural courſe, and to give a compulſory preference to one application of the national capital

capital over another, I ſhould rather recommend the giving it to tillage and to linens, than to a woollen manufacture. Linens certainly can give employment to more men out of the ſame quantity of land, more in number, ſcattered more over the face of the country; the linen manufacturers contribute more to the general good, they contribute alſo more to the general ſtrength, and of courſe, to our defence and our liberty.

THE profit of the nation being but the aggregate of the profits of individuals, if we leave every man to find out what trade he is moſt likely to thrive by, we ſhall probably act with more wiſdom, and grow a richer nation in a ſhort time, than if we burden one trade for the ſake of another; but to burden thoſe trades which encourage population *the moſt*, for the ſake of thoſe which contribute to it *the leaſt*, is perhaps the greateſt abſurdity that ever was propoſed to men of common ſenſe.

I HAVE already ſhewn you how protecting duties will tend to the encreaſe of ſheep, of courſe to the diminution of the land applied to corn; let me here obſerve to you how differently

differently men reaſon in other mens caſes and in their own: Whenever they find there is an apparent ſcarcity of corn, and very often when there is no ſuch apparent ſcarcity, they are clamorous on import; they then totally forget that a protecting duty on foreign corn is the means to cauſe a ſufficient ſupply to be raiſed at home, yet corn is perhaps the only article on which there ought to be a protecting duty; not that I controvert Mr. Adam Smith's poſition, "That if all the nations of the earth would allow the corn trade to be free, corn would on an average be cheaper than it is, but for the following reaſons:

Because it is the policy of other nations frequently to ſtop the export of corn, whenever there has been a bad crop, it is therefore neceſſary for us to provide a domeſtic redundancy, otherwiſe we ſhould be unable in times of ſcarcity to procure any ſupply at all.

But woollens we can get at all times.

Secondly, Becauſe imported corn pays an heavy freight which muſt fall upon the conſumer.

But

BUT an hundred and fifty pounds worth of woollen can be imported at as little coſt as twenty ſhillings worth of corn.

THIRDLY, Becauſe agriculture produces a numerous, hardy, and virtuous race of men.

BUT a woollen manufacture produces ſheep and the patriots of the Coombe and Poddle.

FOURTHLY, If we grant a protecting duty on foreign corn when it is cheap, we in return lay a prohibition on the export of corn when we have not enough for our own conſumption.

BUT a protecting duty on the import of woollens is required to be laid *at all times*; nay, it is aſked when we have *not* a ſufficiency of wool for our own conſumption; that is, under the very circumſtances in which we *admit* foreign corn, inſtead of prohibiting it, and under which we prevent the export of our own corn, inſtead of encouraging it by bounty.

CHAP. III.

Of the ſuppoſed diſtreſs of the woollen manufacturers.

IF the diſtreſſes of any ſet of men be pretended; the reſult of idleneſs; or the art of their employers, who wiſh to obtain a monopoly againſt their fellow ſubjects; we muſt naturally expect to ſee itinerant committees that are paid to beg; an unremitting war of paragraphs; aggregate meetings attended by few except public incendiaries, and intereſted men who interrupt all freedom of debate, and prevent all fair diſcuſſion of the ſubject; a vaſt deal of artful clamour, complaints of poverty and preſents of plate, pathetic appeals to our humanity, and outrages that are ſhocking to human nature.

IF the diſtreſs be real, we ſhall be able to ſee the cauſes of it, in the circumſtances of the trade; now, what are the circumſtances? The

The manufacture of old drapery ſeems to have advanced nearly as far as the quantity of wool in the nation will permit it; for of cloathing wool we export but 2400 ſtones annually: now, whether theſe 2400 ſtones be the thouſandth part or the five hundredth part of the wool of Ireland, is not very well worth computation. It is clear that we underſell the Engliſh in our own markets within a very trifle, as far as we have cloathing wool to work up.

Old Drapery exported.

		Yards.
Years ending March	1779	Nil.
	1780	494
	1781	3740
	1782	4633
	1783	40,389

We ſee here an operating export rapidly encreaſing, and we ſee that as far as 40,389 yards we can contend in foreign markets, when we muſt pay freight and commiſſion as well as our competitors; yet they tell us, that we cannot contend with them in Ireland where our competitors pay theſe expences,

we do not. If they tell us that our manufacturers are undone becauſe wool is dear in Ireland, I anſwer, the dearneſs is not the cauſe of their diſtreſs, but the effects of their proſperity. The price of cloathing wool is not high on account of the demand for it from England, for it is cheaper in England than in Ireland; it is cauſed by the competition of the Iriſh buyers, who never can give an higher price than the profit of their manufacture enables them to do. That we export 2400 ſtones is the confutation of this argument, for ſo ſmall a quantity as that may be of uſe in working ſome particular fabrics, but our exporting no more wool than that pittance is a confirmation of what I ſay, for if there were not a better demand for it in Ireland than in England, we ſhould ſend them a great deal more.

Of the new drapery, of the decreaſe whereof Mr. Benjamin Haughton complains, the increaſe is ſtill more evident, and it is natural that it ſhould be ſo, becauſe we have there more materials to work upon, and we ſee there more evidently the effects of the free trade.

New

New Drapery exported.

		Yards.
Years ending March	1779	Nil.
	1780	8653
	1781	286,859
	1782	336,607
	1783	538,061

We ſee alſo the export of bay yarn decreaſing without a protecting duty, becauſe the Iriſh manufacturer finds it more his intereſt to avail himſelf of the pre-emption of that article, that is, becauſe his trade is encreaſing.

The export of bay yarn is now no more than what follows:

		Stones	lb.
Years ending March	1782	83,821	8
	1783	66,677	—

When Mr. Haughton was aſked, what will be the produce of the average quantity of bay yarn exported from this country if wrought up here into piece goods; and what number of hands would it employ?

He anſwered, the quantity of bay yarn annually exported from this kingdom, on an average of ſeven years, ending March 25, 1770,

1770, amounted to 142,890 great ſtones, &c.

It is not my wiſh to comment on the nature of Mr. Haughton's anſwer, nor his reaſons for chuſing the year 1770 rather than the year 1783; ſo far as his anſwer gives us a ſtrong fact it is worth recording; the average export of bay yarn to the year 1770, he tells us was 142,890 ſtones;

The average of ſeven years ending 1783 was	}	66,670 ſtones.
So it decreaſed -		74,220 ſtones.

Do you wiſh for farther proofs of the *encreaſe* of their manufacture, whoſe *decline* is ſo deeply lamented? I will give you then one more; I will take Mr. Haughton's year 1770. In that year we imported 462,499 yards, and we had then no power to export; but in the *calamitous* year 1783, we imported but 420,415 yards, though we in the ſame year, 1783, ſpared to foreign countries an export of 538,061, a quantity greater than the whole import at either period. To talk of the decline of the manufacture after ſuch facts as theſe, is to inſult your underſtanding; it is to ſuppoſe you factious enough to take up any queſtion that may promote diſcontents,

and

and too indolent to make any enquiry into the *truth* of what is offered to you.

It is but about four years ſince we have availed ourſelves of a free export of woollens. Now, as the apprenticeſhip to a woollen weaver uſually takes up more than four years, there can have entered into that trade very few more than thoſe who made it their choice when it was under more unfavourable circumſtances than it is at preſent. The ſame men who, without compulſion, made choice of that trade when it was oppreſſed, are almoſt the only ones to carry it on now that it has an encouragement. Can men of common ſenſe be made to believe that want of employment is the peculiar grievance of that trade, where there is an encreaſe of work done without an encreaſe of the workmen to do it?

You ſee by the facts I have ſtated, that they can contend in foreign countries with thoſe competitors who, if you believe themſelves, are able to beat them in this domeſtic market; you ſee that they are gaining yearly upon thoſe foreign competitors, though they themſelves live in the moſt unfit place in the kingdom for any manufacture—in the metro-

metropolis—in the ſeat of ſloth—drunkenneſs —faction, and dear proviſions—yet even there they can encreaſe their trade; ſo very favourably is it circumſtanced, and ſo much has the free trade availed them.

WERE they obliged to diſperſe themſelves into diſtant provinces, as you are, I ſhould indeed believe in their diſtreſs, but a monopoly againſt you would not be the remedy I ſhould propoſe for it. They talk of emigrating to America—How many of them have emigrated to Proſperous—what authentic accounts have you of theſe formidable emigrations?—None—The emigrants have been, in general, more valuable ſubjects, linen, not woollen manufacturers, the men againſt whom the monopoly is to be, not thoſe in whoſe favour it is demanded.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of Commercial Maxims.

IT is not neceſſary for the maſs of the people to have their heads filled with good commercial maxims—for without any ſuch ſyſtematical knowledge a nation may flouriſh, if it will but leave trade to itſelf. The profit of the nation being but the aggregate of the profits of individuals, and the encreaſe of national wealth being but the aggregate of what is ſaved by individuals, we may be pretty confident that men when left to their own judgment, will prefer and follow thoſe trades which conduce the moſt to the national wealth; for they will chooſe thoſe which will enable them to make the greateſt earnings, and to lay by the greateſt ſavings.—If trade be left at liberty, the conſumer will, from free import and from the fair competition of thoſe he is to buy from, be enabled to obtain whatever he wants on the cheapeſt terms; the gentleman will get more in exchange for the rent

of his land, the mechanic will get more in exchange for the price of his labour, than he could do if he were reſtrained by law from going to the cheapeſt vender. Strong incitements it muſt be owned to the gentleman to live at home, and to the mechanic to be induſtrious.—In this caſe, if the manufacturer will have no monopoly againſt any of his countrymen, neither will any of them have a monopoly againſt him, every thing will be ſold as cheaply as either the country itſelf, or any other country can ſupply it; and no part of any man's profit will be a tax upon his neighbour; to what degree a country which enjoyed a fertile ſoil and a free conſtitution, and which was leſs taxed than any of its neighbours, might flouriſh under ſuch a commerce, is a queſtion which we cannot reſolve from *experience*, for we know of no country where the experiment has been fairly tried.—Often to gratify a particular ſet of men, more frequently to diſtreſs ſome neighbouring ſtate the commerce of every country, I know of has in ſome inſtances been reſtrained. I know of no country, however, where it has been confined either univerſally or impartially, nor of any general and unvaried rule of ſelf-reſtraint which any nation has adopted. There

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is no code more various or more vague than that code of commercial maxims which has been ſubſtituted in the place of this ſimple rule—leave trade to direct itſelf.

But a ſet of falſe commercial maxims, or a miſapplication of the trueſt, is fatal indeed—to ſuch a country as *this*, *peculiarly* fatal—for as we have but little capital, it is very important that we ſhould not miſapply the little we have—And as we have a free trade, the beſt applications of that capital are in our power, if we do not prevent them by our laws.—There is no maxim more generally received than this, that it is wiſe for a nation to work up its own raw materials—Even this maxim is not univerſally true, and the degree to which it may be true or falſe depends on the ſtate of the country. If a manufacturer goes to America, he finds it his intereſt to quit his trade, and betake himſelf to the culture of the earth, whereby he can earn 2*s*. 6*d*. by the day.

In the preſent ſtate of America, therefore, labour can be better applied than to manufactures; perhaps this may be the caſe even in an European country. Naples exports ſilk

and buys ſilk ſtockings from England; are we to conclude from thence that it would be wiſe to force the induſtry of the Neapolitans into the manufacture of ſilk ſtockings? Perhaps it would not; perhaps there may be a ſtill better mode of applying it. I have ſeen a letter of Sir William Hamilton's publiſhed, which tells us, that the fineſt land in that kingdom, and as fine perhaps as any in the world, does not produce five ſhillings per acre; but that if there were hands to gather the ſilk only, it would produce five pounds; perhaps, therefore, that country has not arrived to that ſtate in which it ought to work up its own raw materials; it ought firſt to be able to gather them in. I only ſay this to ſhew you that the maxim may not be univerſally true. In a country where the land has been cleared and is tolerably improved, the relative profit of agriculture diminiſhes, and the relative profit of manufacture increaſes; thus the actual ſtate of a country (if it be free) naturally directs the labour of man to what ever is moſt fit for that ſtate, and moſt conducive to its progreſs towards a better one. I am very happy to find that Ireland has paſſed the firſt, and has arrived at the ſecond ſtage of improvement. Manufactures

here

here are profitable. It is right that we ſhould work up *our* raw wool, and that it is ſo, is proved from this, that we *do* work up our raw wool without the aid of a protecting duty. With reſpect to us, therefore, the commercial maxim, *work up your raw materials*, is in this inſtance true; but mark the error which follows, and the groſs *miſapplication* of this true maxim. Becauſe we ought to work up the wool which we *have*, they ſay we ought to extend the manufacture farther; that is, we ought to work up the wool which we have *not*. They ſay wool is a native commodity *natural* to this country. Now, the *additional* quantity of wool which we ſhould grow in conſequence of protecting duties, would be a *forced* and not a *natural* product, in the preſent improved ſtate of the country. To weave the wool which wehave in our preſent ſtate of agriculture, and to force us back from that ſtate of agriculture, are as different things as to cut turf on our bogs would be, from making bogs in order to cut turf.

FROM the quantity of wool which we once had, it was not a bad ſpeculation to think we ſhould

ſhould now have a great manufacture of woollens. I am glad to find by an enquiry into the fact, that we imperceptibly have paſſed by that ſtate of *incultivation*. I am informed that fifteen acres of ſheep walk will produce wool enough to employ a weaver twelve months: Compute the number of perſons to whom fifteen acres of tillage land will give food and employment; compute the ſtill greater number to whom fifteen acres of flax will give employment, and you will not lament that Ireland produces leſs wool than it uſed to do.

I KNOW that many ſuperficial reaſoners will be ſurpriſed at this doctrine: They will aſk, is not England more advanced in wealth and population than Ireland, and has not England an immenſe woollen manufacture? They will tell you of the populouſneſs of her cloathing towns, and of the Riches which they earn and diſſeminate. I anſwer, that it is very true, England has a prodigious number of ſheep, perhaps, as Mr. Young computes, above twenty millions; that England is better adapted to ſheep than Ireland, appears from this, that though our wool is dearer than theirs by about four ſhillings the ſtone,

yet

yet that country has proportionably to its ſize more ſheep than this; but if it be true that a part of England be more peopled, it is alſo true that a very conſiderable part is leſs peopled than Ireland. From a free and proſperous commerce, from a thouſand advantages long poſſeſſed by her, and but recently acquired by us, ſhe exhibits in many parts a ſcene of wealth and population, which for years we cannot expect to attain to. In the midſt of thoſe ſcenes ſhe exhibits *more* waſte lands than Ireland; if ſhe did not, the population of England would be twelve inſtead of ſix millions; and if it contains no more than ſix millions, as we ſee that ſo many parts of it are amazingly populous, we muſt be convinced that the other parts are extremely defective in population. Incapable of arriving at once to her wealth and improvement, let us not think her waſtes and her defects the proper objects of our envy or imitation. As to her cloathing towns, if the produce of 200,000 acres be all manufactured in one place, that place will be thriving and populous, and ſo will the immediate neighbourhood of it; but unleſs we compute how many acres of the country may be depopulated to furniſh that town with wool, our reaſonings muſt be utterly inconcluſive. It is the way with every favourer of every

every manufacture to fall into this general error or impoſition, they always compute what is *gained*, but they never compute what is *loſt* by it: They will tell you of the number of hands which the application of a part of our capital to that trade will employ, but they are totally ſilent as to thoſe whom the ſubtraction of that capital from other trades will deprive of employment.

As to the manufacture of Spaniſh wool, the raw material is not of our own growth, and there is no general prepoſſeſſion in its favour; there is no reaſon upon earth why that trade ſhould be forced in preference to any other. In the courſe of things and without force it will proſper to a certain degree. It is not ſo likely to proſper here as in England becauſe we are not ſo far advanced. The lands of Ireland are ſo unimproved, that it has been computed that eighty millions would ſcarcely bring them to the ſtate of the cultivated parts of England. The profits of improving land in Ireland, though leſs than in America are yet ſo great, that fifteen per cent for ever has been realized by a judicious application of money to the improvement of the ſoil. Under theſe circumſtances a very ſmall proportion

portion of our wealth is likely to be applied to the manufacture of a foreign material, and certainly we ought not to divert our money from the beſt of all applications, and the moſt laſting of all improvements. When peace and commerce ſhall open a greater intercourſe with Spain, when the ſpirit of public ſedition and ignorant outrage ſhall no longer deter foreigners from ſettling in a country to which the cheapneſs of labour would invite them, if the bad execution of the laws did not keep them away, then and not till then, the manufacture of Spaniſh wool will become conſiderable. In the whole code of commercial principles, there is not one which would tend to enrich this nation ſo much as a ſtability in the public mind; a perfect ſecurity of perſons and property from the attacks of the populace, and a ſtrict execution of the laws. A cruel and lawleſs commonalty, and a conniving magiſtracy will never make us a thriving nation; men of property will be deterred from ſettling in the ſeat of lawleſs barbariſm, and feeble and unmeaning ſedition.—Enemies to every wiſe regulation in favour of agriculture, and ready to ſacrifice the linen manufacture, the populace of Dublin are ſcarcely more enemies to you than to themſelves;

it is in ſpite of them that they have laws to protect their perſons; it is in ſpite of them that their city is encreaſed and ornamented; it is in ſpite of them that their city is paved, it is in ſpite of them that they have bread to eat. But I am not writing a political but a commercial eſſay, an eſſay on a ſubject requiring accurate argument and a thorough knowledge of facts. If you will be at the trouble of thinking upon it, I am convinced you will think juſtly, but if you will make an oppoſition queſtion of every commercial ſubject, if you will take up every thing which the moſt ignorant of mankind will propoſe to you, I muſt lament that a nation in ſuch a temper is on the eve of a commercial arrangement, with a cool and knowing people: You will then be unqueſtionably injured in the courſe of that tranſaction. What a ſtate of things is this? That the men who are to ſupport your intereſt, are to be over-borne by the ignorant clamor of thoſe who are ready to ſacrifice you, that their nonſenſe is to paſs for the ſenſe of the nation, and that you think it virtuous and popular to become acceſſary by your ſilence to your own ruin.

ANOTHER falſe and dangerous commercial maxim is this—to follow the example of another nation becauſe that nation has thriven. That other nation may have thriven in ſpite, and not becauſe of the conduct which is propoſed to our imitation, or it may have thriven becauſe it was circumſtanced in a manner different from, or oppoſite to, our own, yet there are men who think it excellent reaſoning to ſay, "Adopt protecting duties *after the example of the wiſeſt nations*; England has protecting duties and England is rich; therefore if you have a mind to be rich, adopt protecting duties." One might juſt as well ſay, "Philip of Macedon was a great man and wanted an eye, therefore if you have a mind to be a great man put out one of your eyes."

WHEN England impoſed protecting duties, ſhe was in a ſituation the reverſe of ours: So far from not having wool enough for her own conſumption, it was the greateſt article of her export; for ages ſhe ſent it abroad, it was the article with which ſhe uſually paid her forces abroad; if protecting duties be the cauſes of her improvement, they are cauſes of rather ſlow operation: They were impoſed in the reign of Edward III. and in the reign

of Elizabeth, England was not as commercial nor as manufacturing a country as Ireland is at this day. If I were to be guided by example, (which I am not, for we never know all the circumſtances of the caſe) I ſhould decide againſt protecting duties: America, againſt whom they were laid, has thriven faſter than England, in whoſe favour they were enacted. Ireland within thirty years, has thriven faſter than England.

The countries where manufactures have been kept back, have thriven faſter than thoſe where they have been forced forward; the countries who have preferred agriculture to manufactures, have received the moſt rapid, as well as the moſt permanent of all improvements; the amelioration of their ſoil, and the population of it; the population of it by an hardy and induſtrious race of men, the improvers and defenders of this country.

Sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet et rerum facta eſt pulcherrima Roma.

The country which has thriven the leaſt of any in modern Europe is Denmark, which has

has adopted this policy with the moſt devoted partiality. When we ſee the moſt ignorant of mankind, dogmatically deciding on the niceſt queſtions of commerce, let us not be furpriſed if ſtateſmen and miniſters have indulged ſome portion of this vanity: Almoſt every country has fettered its own commerce, but whether they have ſhewn more judgment in thoſe inſtances where they have bound it, than thoſe in which they have left it free, is a queſtion which neither every weaver, nor every young gentleman of parts is competent to determine. France, after the experience of years, begins to doubt the infallibility of the great Colbert, the once admired patron of the reſtrictive ſyſtem of commerce. Perhaps Ireland may diſcover ſome errors in the committee of Dublin manufacturers, who have taken up this ſubject with ſo much judgment and impartiality, and who have decided it in their own favour.

We are very liable to miſtake the motives upon which men in power have laid duties upon the import of foreign goods: We ſee England prohibiting the ſilks of France, and France prohibiting the woollens of England. By this means each country pays more for its cloaths than otherwiſe it would have done, and it is very

very probable that the trade and induſtry of each country is diminiſhed by theſe mutual ill-offices; but are we of courſe to aſcribe this to either the wiſdom or the folly of theſe two nations? no, their mutual animoſity will account for it much better.

The jealous ſpirit of Britiſh commerce, has often induced that nation to forget that her capital, though immenſe, was not unlimited. By her navigation act, by her various bounties, and by her various reſtrictions, ſhe ſeems to have had a hope of monopolizing every branch of commerce; but ſhe has found that as ſhe gained one branch, ſhe loſt ſome other. If the ſyſtem ſhe has purſued has been univerſally wiſe, it ought to follow, that ſhe not only ſhould have a great commerce, but that ſhe ſhould have greater commerce in proportion to her capital than any nation upon earth. Ireland, on the other hand, ought to have leſs commerce in proportion to her little capital, than any nation we know of, for there is no country where trade has been ſuffered to make its own way with ſo little artificial aſſiſtance. You will ſtare, perhaps, when I aſſert that Ireland has more foreign trade, in proportion to her capital, than Great Britain.

The commercial capital of Britain, never has, and I believe it hardly can be eſtimated, to be leſs than ten times as great as the capital of this country, of courſe the imports and exports of Britain ought to be ten times as much as thoſe of Ireland. Now what is the fact? The exports of Britain, by the returns of her cuſtom-houſe, are about twelve millions—her imports about nine millions—her clandeſtine trade I confeſs, has by ſome perſons been eſtimated to be four millions—this is not proved, but allow it to be true, and if you will, ſuppoſe on the other hand that Ireland has no clandeſtine trade at all, yet even thus our exports amount not to a tenth, but to a fourth part of the exports of Britain, and our imports bear nearly the ſame proportion, a fourth. Should not this ſtrong fact rather lead us to doubt the wiſdom of the Britiſh ſyſtem of forced encouragements and reſtrictions, than to adopt that part of ſuch a ſyſtem which the traders of Dublin propoſe to us? We ſometimes remember, and we ſometimes forget this principle, that if we force capital into one trade, we ſubtract from another. If we hear of an Engliſh Company undertaking to work a mine in Ireland, we are very glad of it; why are we ſo? Why

do

do we not deſire a law to confine the profits of that buſineſs to Iriſhmen? In this caſe we act as we ought, but if a manufacture is to be forced, then we totally forget the principle. We ſeem to think that the capital and hands which are forced into that trade, would otherwiſe have been uſeleſs and unemployed, never conſidering that this capital, and thoſe hands, would of themſelves go into that trade if it were as profitable as others, and that the advanced price which we force the conſumer to pay, is a tax paid by Iriſhmen and not by ſtrangers. I believe the moſt judicious amongſt you are ſenſible that the export of your linens through England is a great advantage to you; were you in all inſtances forced to find a foreign market for them yourſelves, then Ireland would be obliged to employ a part of that capital in foreign trade, which, under its preſent deſignation, ſets a vaſt quantity of domeſtic induſtry in motion. To find ſhips, to make aſſortments, to ſeek foreign markets, and to bring back other goods in return is one mode of employing commercial capital, to ſpin, to weave, to bring linens to a near market, is another mode of employing it.

Is

Is it not evident that the ſame capital cannot do both of theſe things to the ſame extent, to which it could effect one of them only? Commerce, when left to itſelf, adapts itſelf to the ſtate of things, and to the intereſt of the community. An infant ſociety finds it moſt profitable to clear its lands, and the ſhips of other countries take its raw products and bring to it the conveniencies of life in return. A country that has made more progreſs begins to manufacture; when it goes on further it manufactures more, and it becomes the carrier of its own merchandize, more or leſs, according to the degree of the improvement. By the increaſe of wealth and the competition of its merchants, the profits of all theſe trades decline, and they become carriers for other nations. In every part of this progreſs, the immediate intereſt of the individual leads him to thoſe employments which are ſuited to the actual ſtate of the ſociety. Next to the ſecurities of perſons and of property, from monarchs or from mobs, the great cauſe of reſidence, and the great ſource of improvement is cheapneſs; and can you doubt that a country in which all the productions of the world

would be ſold at that price to which the freeſt competition would reduce them, would be the cheapeſt country in the world? I agree, therefore, with thoſe who ſay that it would be unwiſe in Great Britain, if in reſentment for our laying a duty on their favourite manufacture, ſhe ſhould lay a duty on our linens—But why would it be unwiſe? Becauſe it would make an eſſential article to come dearer to themſelves; that is, it would be unwiſe on the very ſame principles which would make it abſurd in us to tax their woollens—But if it were judicious in us to force the trade of woollens, then it would be alſo judicious in England to force the trade of linens; her lands are certainly fit for the culture of flax, and a ſmall tax on *your* manufacture would increaſe *their own*; let them but reaſon like the Dublin traders; let them but think it beneficial to make that at home which they can buy cheaper from ſtrangers, and their policy muſt lead them to tax Iriſh linens; they will have the example of Ireland to imitate, and they will then have nothing like a compact with this country to reſtrain them.

THERE is not an argument made uſe of by the ſagacious patriots of Dublin, that could not be uſed with equal force by an Engliſh linen manufacturer: He might tell his countrymen, if you thought there was any thing like a compact exiſting with Ireland, they themſelves have declared it to be at an end, they have told us that we cannot reſent their following our maxims; they have taxed our ſtaple manufacture, woollens; certainly they will be too juſt to reſent our following *their* maxims; let us tax their ſtaple, let us protect our linen manufacture; it has been the practice of all wiſe nations to protect their manufactures; Ireland is a very wiſe nation, for whoſe opinions we ought to have the greateſt reſpect; let us lay a protecting duty in imitation of her, and without doubt ſhe will be extremely flattered by the compliment; if Ireland has been wiſe in doing this with reſpect to woollens, we ſhall be five times as wiſe in doing this with reſpect to linens, for the linens we ſhall exclude are worth five times as much as the woollens againſt which ſhe has protected herſelf.

I REALLY do not ſee how I could anſwer this ſort of reaſoning, except by recurring

to thoſe arguments which have ſo little weight with the citizens of Dublin. I hope and believe, however, that the legiſlature of England will not pay the opinions of thoſe gentlemen a very implicit deference, for I think that the Engliſh demand for linens is very likely to encreaſe at this moment, unleſs we ſhall deem it adviſable to put a ſtop to it. The trade from England to Germany was extremely encouraged by the monopoly of tobacco which England poſſeſſed; England has loſt that monopoly. Some of the countries who uſed to take the linens of Ireland are likely to have a part of that tobacco trade, and to trade to Germany; it is impoſſible to foreſee the courſe of commerce, but it is very likely that Germany will now rival Ireland in many of the linen markets abroad, and that Ireland will rival Germany more and more in the market of England; the Engliſh market is therefore likely both to encreaſe and become more neceſſary to us than ever.

On the eve of a commercial arrangement, the wiſdom or the erors of which will affect your lateſt poſterity, two oppoſite ſyſtems are ſubmitted to your judgment; the ſyſtem ad-

adopted by the Dublin traders ſeems to be this—exclude from your market thoſe manufactures of your ſiſter country which ſhe can make better and cheaper than you do, and force Ireland to make them for herſelf. The other is the ſyſtem which I have ſubmitted to you, a ſyſtem, not of mutual excluſion, but of mutual admiſſion of the manufactures of each other; by this the inhabitants of each country will be ſupplied with every manufacture as cheaply as the ſkill and induſtry of either can make it. In our late corn act, we have made ſome advances to this ſyſtem, and the more nearly we approach to it, the more I believe are both nations likely to be benefited. But if at ſo critical a time as this, you will adopt the abſurdities of every intereſted man; if you will call every thing patriotiſm that has the face of oppoſition, though it be injurious to both yourſelves and your native country; and if you will go and ſuffer martyrdom at the ſhrine of diſcontent, how is it poſſible to ſerve you? If men ſupport your intereſt both againſt clamour and outrage, will they not want ſome ſupport from you? If it be the wiſh of men in power to ſerve their country and to pleaſe it, they ſtand in a very awkward predicament, for the things which would

would ſerve this country are not aſked for, and the things which are aſked for would not ſerve the country. The object which has been fixed upon as the moſt worthy of our care, is a very minute as well as a very abſurd one; that one thirtieth part of our imports would be ſtruck off by adopting protecting duties on coarſe woollens appears utterly improbable, when we conſider the facility of the clandeſtine trade, and how much our *exports* may eventually be diminiſhed by it, is a matter very difficult of computation: I mean how much they would be diminiſhed excluſive of the conſequences which would enſue if England were to adopt the ſame meaſure with reſpect to us, which we think it wiſe and not unkind to adopt with reſpect to her. They, indeed, may be more eaſily computed, they may be computed with the almoſt total deſtruction of the linen trade of Ireland; if we are to give any peculiar aid to a manufacture, which neither peculiarly wants nor merits it, let it be *by bounty*, for that will be only ſo much money thrown away; it may be paid by ſome tax on the luxuries of the rich, but a *protecting duty* is a tax on the neceſſaries of the poor and the induſtrious.

THE commerce of the world is about to take a new direction. If in the proper arrangement we ſhall be guided by falſe principles, that direction will not be to Ireland; if by true ones, we ſhall begin our career with very peculiar advantages indeed. The commercial ſyſtem of other countries has been ſo confined and complicated by their own errors, by their liſtening to every clamour, by their partialities to particular ſets of men, and particular branches of trade, that it is ſcarcely in their power to emancipate their commerce from the bondage to which they themſelves have doomed it; Ireland is ſtill free to chooſe. We have indeed languiſhed for want of capital, which would flow in upon us if we were leſs oſtentatious of our diſcontents; we have labour cheaper than other nations; we can have foreign articles as cheap, if we do not prevent them by our own folly; we have more coaſt, more rivers, fewer taxes and leſs expenſive eſtabliſhments than any nation of either our wealth or our magnitude. If any man controverts this, let him tell which is that other nation? We have the protection of a great navy without paying a ſhip, the conſequence of that more than fœderal union with

with Great Britain, that new phænomenon in the world, by which we have the independence of a *free ſtate* and the protected condition of a great empire; we have an undiſputed claim to be *equally* conſidered in every treaty which that great empire ſhall make, without paying even an ambaſſador; we have equal acceſs to ſettlements on the ſame terms with their proprietor, and could we expect it on better? On the ſame terms except in one particular, that we do not lay a ſtone to a fortreſs, to the military force which guards them, we are joint, but not ſeparate contributors; We have political liberty perfect, we have civil liberty imperfect, you will ſay; but certainly as nearly perfect as any other country we know or have read of, and we have a geographical ſituation of whoſe advantages we have not yet made a ſufficient trial; I do not mean by this to ſay, that we ought not to amend our conſtitution if we can truly do ſo, I am writing only on a commercial ſubject—on the means and on the probability of encreaſing our wealth and induſtry; in that light it is fair to compare this country, not with an ideal country where every thing is ſuppoſed to be perfect, but with thoſe with whom we are to deal, and who are either to be our cuſtomers or our competitors. On the other hand, we have ſome

diſadvan-

diſadvantages—we have very little commercial knowledge, and are apt to make very ſudden deciſions on ſubjects which require much thought and knowledge; we are extremely fond of a reſtrictive ſyſtem of commerce, and we would fain wrap our infant trade in ſwaddling cloths inſtead of ſuffering it to ſtretch itſelf at pleaſure; we are not like England, divided into two great factions, each of which openly aſpire to the adminiſtration, and is to be ſupported in its pretenſions by its partizans and by its good conduct, but we are divided in a manner ſtill more prejudicial to the fair diſcuſſion of any one ſubject, into factions called court and country; accordingly we take up every thing that is againſt the court with the zeal of partizans, rather than with the coolneſs of judges. Were we to judge between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, we would decide impartially, but between court and country we ſcarcely look upon impartiality as a virtue, for though a court meaſure may be good, yet we think it hurts the cauſe of oppoſition to do it juſtice; accordingly if men clamour againſt the court, at the ſame time that they propoſe a meaſure for their own particular intereſts and againſt that of their country, we do not give it a fair

examination, for we ſeem rather to ſeek for triumphs than advantages. If we thus ſuffer commercial queſtions to take the complexion of party, I cannot expect much good from our commercial arrangements; it is but too likely that with great difficulty and ſome conceſſions we may obtain what may do ſome harm, and that England in order to ſatisfy us, may conſent to ſomething which will give us no laſting ſatisfaction.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

An Account of the Quantity and Value of New and Old Drapery exported out of Ireland, for four Years, ending 25th March, 1783, each Year diſtinguiſhed.

	DRAPERY.			
	New.	Value.		
Years, ending 25th March,	Yards.	£.	s.	d.
1780	8653	865	6	0
1781	286859	28685	18	0
1782	336607½	33660	15	0
1783	538061	53806	2	0

	DRAPERY.			
	Old.	Value.		
Years, ending 25th March,	Yards.	£.	s.	d.
1780	494	164	13	4
1781	3740	1246	13	4
1782	4633	1544	6	8
1783	40589	13529	13	4

An Account of the Quanties and Value of Old Drapery imported into this kingdom from Great Britain from the earlieſt Period to the 25th March, 1783, diſtinguiſhing each Year.

Years, ending 25th December,

Years.	Drapery, Old. Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1698	11784¼	8838	3	9
1699	10569¾	7927	6	3
1700	12019½	9014	12	6
1701	16086	12064	10	0
1702	19258	14443	10	0
1703	14599¼	10949	8	9
1704	10458¾	7844	1	3
1705	12008	1066	0	0
1706	5514½	4135	17	6
1707	6459½	4844	12	6

For the Quarter, ending 25th March,

1708	1400½	1050	7	6

Years, ending 25th March,

1709		5770½	4327	17	6
1710	England	8165½	6532	8	0
	Scotland	175	140	0	0
1711	England	10415½	8332	8	0
	Scotland	4	3	4	0
1712	England	10518	8414	8	0
1713	England	11440	9152	0	0
	Scotland	152½	122	16	0

Years, ending 25th March,

Drapery, Old

Years.		Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1714	England	11318¼	9054	12	9
1715	England	15585½	12468	8	0
	Scotland	3½	2	16	0
1716	England	17094¼	13675	8	0
1717	England	20570¼	10285	2	6
1718	England	21930¾	10965	7	6
	Scotland	16	8	0	0
1719	England	18395½	9197	15	0
	Scotland	10½	5	5	0
1720	England	22833	17124	15	0
1721	England	20827¼	15620	8	9
	Scotland	27½	20	12	6
1722	England	12468¼	9351	3	9
	Scotland	24	18	0	0
1723	England	17194½	12895	17	6
1724	England	24984¾	18738	11	3
1725	England	20665¾	15499	6	3
	Scotland	25	18	15	0
1726	England	29541½	22155	15	0
	Scotland	66	49	10	0
1727	England	20773	15579	15	0
1728	England	24631	18473	5	0
1729	England	24399¼	18299	8	9
	Scotland	13	9	15	0
1730	England	18776¼	14157	3	9
1731	England	14501	10875	15	0
	Scotland	12	9	0	0
1732	G.Britain	16097	11267	18	0
1733	Ditto	19083½	13358	0	0
1734	Ditto	19640¼	14730	3	9
1735	Ditto	11197¾	8398	6	3
1736	Ditto	13361½	9353	1	0
1737	Ditto	9626½	6497	17	9

Years, ending 25th March,

Drapery, Old

Years.		Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1738	G.Britain	16073	10715	6	8
1739	——	10624¼	7082	16	8
1740	——	16714¼	11421	8	1
1741	——	12918¼	8612	10	0
1742	——	22971½	17228	8	9
1743	——	14582¼	10936	17	6
1744	——	20981¼	15735	18	9
1745	——	14420¾	10815	11	3
1746	——	23634	17725	10	0
1747	——	19508	13655	13	9
1748	——	44111¼	33083	8	9
1749	——	43647¼	30553	1	6
1750	——	56004¼	39202	19	6
1751	——	45565¼	31895	13	6
1752	——	74772½	52340	15	0
1753	——	63715¾	44625	10	6
1754	——	100375¼	70262	13	6
1755	——	56883¾	39818	12	6
1756	——	73038¾	51127	2	6
1757	——	77763¼	54434	5	6
1758	——	114568½	80197	19	0
1759	——	125865¾	88106	0	6
1760	——	161465½	113025	17	0
1761	——	179044½	125331	3	0
1762	——	197634¼	138343	19	6
1763	——	186029¼	130220	19	6
1764	——	220820¾	154574	10	6
1765	——	176161½	123313	1	0
1766	——	197315¼	138120	13	6
1767	——	189882¾	132917	18	6
1768	——	198664½	139065	3	0
1769	——	207117¾	144982	8	6

Years, ending 25th March,

Years.		Drapery, Old			
		Yards.	Value.		
			£.	s.	d.
1770	G.Britain	249666¾	174766	14	6
1771	——	217395	152176	10	0
1772	——	153566	107496	4	0
1773	——	210065¼	147045	13	6
1774	——	282277	197593	18	0
1775	——	281379½	196965	13	0
1776	——	290215	203150	10	0
1777	——	381330	266931	0	0
1778	——	378077	264653	18	0
1779	——	176196	123337	4	0
1780	——	64346	45042	4	0
1781	——	326578	228604	12	0
1782	——	362824¼	253976	19	6
1783	England	371702½	260191	15	0
	Scotland	169	118	6	0

An

An Account of the Quantities and Value of New Drapery imported into this Kingdom from Great Britain from the earlieſt Period to the 25th March, 1783, diſtinguiſhing each Year.

Years, ending 25th December,

Years.		Drapery, New. Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1698	G. Britain	21294½	1774	10	10
1699	———	23486¼	1957	3	9
1700	———	24522	2043	10	0
1701	———	32791½	4098	18	9
1702	———	30675	3834	7	6
1703	———	23296¼	2912	9	7½
1704	———	12099½	1512	8	9
1705	———	14539	1817	7	6
1706	———	15308½	1913	11	3
1707	England	13305¾	1663	4	4½
	Scotland	56	7	0	0

For the Quarter, ending 25th March,

1708	———	6118	764	15	0

Years, ending 25th March,

1709	England	12728¾	1272	17	6
	Scotland	45	4	10	0
1710	England	12165½	1520	13	9
	Scotland	28	3	10	0
1711	England	14629¾	1828	14	4½
	Scotland	117	14	12	6
1712	England	26185½	3273	3	9
	Scotland	120	15	0	0

Years, ending 25th March,

Years.		Drapery, New			
		Yards.	Value.		
			£.	s.	d.
1713	England	26270	3283	15	0
	Scotland	388	48	10	0
1714	England	35130½	4391	6	3
	Scotland	38	4	15	0
1715	England	70924½	8865	11	3
	Scotland	104	13	0	0
1716	England	50227½	6278	8	9
	Scotland	38	4	15	0
1717	England	51370¼	6421	5	7½
	Scotland	97	12	2	6
1718	England	74761¾	9345	4	4½
	Scotland	71	8	17	6
1719	England	91670	11458	15	0
	Scotland	529½	66	3	9
1720	England	79432½	7943	5	0
	Scotland	120	12	0	0
1721	England	103042½	10304	5	0
	Scotland	257	25	14	0
1722	England	71081½	7108	3	0
	Scotland	81	8	2	0
1723	England	50259¾	5025	19	6
	Scotland	374	37	8	0
1724	England	55067½	5506	15	0
	Scotland	175	17	10	0
1725	England	62118	6211	16	0
	Scotland	940	94	0	0
1726	England	61882	6188	4	0
	Scotland	375	37	10	0
1727	England	51247	5124	14	0
	Scotland	775	77	10	0
1728	England	40444½	4044	9	0
	Scotland	757	75	14	0

Years, ending 25th March,

Years.		Drapery, New. Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1729	England	35521	3552	2	0
	Scotland	384	38	8	0
1730	England	18049	1804	18	0
	Scotland	830	83	12	0
1731	England	21030¾	2103	1	6
	Scotland	339	33	18	0
1732	G. Britain	14747	1474	14	0
1733	——	16752¼	2094	0	7½
1734	——	20216¾	1542	3	9
1735	——	14428	1803	10	0
1736	——	16907¾	2536	3	3
1737	——	17569½	2635	8	0
1738	——	29720½	3715	16	3
1739	——	19640	2455	0	0
1740	——	39064	4883	0	0
1741	——	42504	4958	16	0
1742	——	53364½	6225	17	2
1743	——	65880	7686	0	0
1744	——	77617	9055	6	4
1745	——	55185	6898	2	6
1746	——	76395	9549	7	6
1747	——	53193	6205	17	0
1748	——	83740¼	9769	13	11
1749	——	109284¾	12749	17	9
1750	——	137770¼	16073	3	11
1751	——	140028	17503	10	0
1752	——	192047	24005	17	6
1753	——	151407	18925	17	6
1754	——	220885¾	27610	14	4½
1755	——	128923	16115	7	0
1756	——	116979¼	14622	8	1½
1757	——	100211½	12526	8	9

Years, ending 25th March,

Years.		Drapery, New. Yards.	Value. £.	s.	d.
1758	G. Britain	135939	16992	7	6
1759	——	151838	18979	15	0
1760	——	172125¼	21515	14	4½
1761	——	188593½	23574	3	9
1762	——	210560	26320	0	0
1763	——	213323	26665	7	6
1764	——	248062½	31007	16	3
1765	——	239359¼	29919	18	1½
1766	——	313216½	39152	1	3
1767	——	325585½	40698	3	9
1768	——	337558¼	42194	15	7½
1769	——	394553½	49319	3	9
1770	——	462499	57812	7	6
1771	——	362096	45262	0	0
1772	——	314703½	39337	18	9
1773	——	387143	48392	17	6
1774	——	461407	57675	17	6
1775	——	465611¾	58201	9	4½
1776	——	676485	84560	12	6
1777	——	731819½	91477	8	9
1778	——	741426	92678	6	3
1779	——	270839	33854	17	6
1780	——	159428	19928	10	0
1781	——	433198	54149	15	0
1782	——	547336	68417	0	0
1783	England	409084	51135	10	0
	Scotland	11331	1416	7	6